THE
THIEF SLAIN:
OR THE
Linen Vail Reſtored.

[Price Six-pence.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

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M.C. Goodnight Sculp.t

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OR THE

Linen Vail Restored.

AN

HEROI-COMIC

POEM.

In TWO CANTO'S.

LONDON:

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THE THIEF SLAIN.

CANTO I.

I SING a Linen Vail, the direful cauſe
Of horrid bloodſhed, and of breach of laws;
That linen vail, which pendent ruffles grace,
Of Indian muſlin, or of Flanders lace;
Wide ſtretch'd, and falling down in many a plait,
From the fair boſom to the ſnowy feet;
White as the lily, or the ſkin it hides,
Where charming nature ſhines, and love reſides.
Let Ozell ſing the Bucket, Pope the Lock,
My daring Muſe prefers The Rape of Smock.

But, Celia, Celia, here I ought to aſk
A gracious pardon for this impious taſk:
My beauteous Celia, be not too ſevere;
Thy charms I worſhip, and thy ſenſe revere;
Forgive this tale, ſince modeſty in vain
Would curb the Poet's flight, and ſong reſtrain.

It was the time, when pleaſure crowns the night,
And charms unſeen the eager ſwains delight;
When lovers, by the ſilent minutes bleſt,
Fatigu'd with pleaſure, lay them down to reſt:
'Twas then bright Celia, (never yet enjoy'd)
On her Philemon all her thoughts employ'd;
The gay Philemon, full of life and air,
Who pains unequall'd took to gain the fair,
Dire cogitations ſeiz'd her troubled breaſt,
Diſtracted looks confirm her want of reſt;
She ſighs, and moans, and ſtrives the flame to hide,
To curb her paſſion, and her fondneſs chide.

Now

Now by herſelf, ſhe thus at length confeſt,
With grief unfelt, but in a lover's breaſt.

Should I then fix my happineſs and love
On dear Philemon, and he faithleſs prove,
What pain to me, alas! might thence ariſe:
Perhaps the youth my charms might then deſpiſe.
'Tis poſſible; but yet I can't refrain,
There's ſomething ſo engaging in the ſwain,
Him I muſt love, and venture his diſdain.

Theſe thoughts laid by, ſhe takes another view
Of rich Ambroſio, her lover too:
Ambroſio, who to Inns of Courts belongs,
Where coxcombs and where knaves reſort in throngs;
He on the nymph had caſt an eye before,
And much depended on his ſhining ſtore.
Celia has various conflicts in her mind,
To either ſpark alternately inclin'd:

And now a conteſt great did ſoon commence
Between the charms of one, and t'other's pence.
But ſoon Philemon turn'd the doubtful ſcale,
And did o'er all his rival's wealth prevail.
Thus ſhe broke forth; Philemon, thou art he,
He only, who ſhall my poſſeſſor be:
Henceforth, Ambroſio, from my preſence fly,
My dear Philemon, 'tis for thee I die.

This ſaid, fair Celia bared her lovely breaſt,
Approach'd her toilet, and herſelf undreſt;
Firſt, the gold watch and lockets are laid by,
Thoſe great allurements to a lover's eye;
The decent necklace is pull'd off with care,
And orient pearls that grace the pretty ear;
Her taper fingers now from priſon freed,
The glitt'ring diamond no longer need.
That done, the pinners are laid with by care,
Which to the ſight expoſe her auburn hair;

Down to her waiſt in careleſs curls it plays,
And negligently flows a thouſand ways;
Part forward falls, her iv'ry front to ſhade,
And part hangs careleſs, on her back diſplay'd;
Some locks diſorder'd, her white breaſts conceal,
But here and there a pleaſing glance you ſteal.
The night-dreſs covers now her lovely head,
And mobs, which ladies chuſe to wear in bed:
She takes the glaſs, and does her form ſurvey,
Nor thinks her graces fewer than by day.
She then proceeds, takes off her tiſſue gown,
And lets the ſpacious petticoat fall down.
The ſtays that compaſs round her ſlender waiſt,
Which kings themſelves might wiſh to have em-
brac'd,
Now leave her unconfin'd, and are unlac'd.
Then Celia ſitting to pull off her ſhoe,
Expoſes all her under parts to view.

Almoſt undreſt, her ſmock ſhe ſtript the laſt,
Thinking no lover there an eye would caſt;

But

But ah! Philemon, in a luckleſs hour,
By ſtealth came up, and peep'd in thro' the door;
That door, thro' which his eyes a paſſage found,
And every thing he ſaw increas'd his wound.
Thro' crevice ſmall, with joy his bliſs reviews,
In extaſy the pleaſing ſight purſues:
Her beauteous face now unobſerv'd, alas!
His eye he centers on another place:
He view'd her breaſts; but lower, what was there!
Too much to view, and not enjoy the fair:
Philemon out of patience grown at laſt,
To ſee the charm, and not the pleaſure taſte,
Aſſails the door, and by his youthful might,
An entrance made to try his fate that night.

Celia, alarm'd at this untimely noiſe,
Slips on her night-ſhift, and exalts her voice;
Her wrapping-gown ſhe then put on in haſte,
And negligently threw it round her waiſt.

Now young Philemon boldly ventures in,
Fearleſs of danger, and of female din,
Made his advances to the beauteous Maid,
And many fine and pleaſing things he ſaid.
Celia, confus'd, lays by the dreſs of day,
By chance the Smock expos'd and careleſs lay;
Which bold Philemon ſeiz'd, and kiſs'd the veil,
Which ſtol'n from Celia, made the nymph grow pale.
His blood's on fire, and love his heart invades;
Joy fills his boſom, anger fills the maid's.

Whilſt Celia in confuſion ſenſeleſs lay,
Of ſpeech depriv'd, at Smock thus forc'd away.
But e'er 'twas long, with anger and ſurprize,
Her viſage chang'd, ſhe darts her flaming eyes;
Her wrath no longer able to conceal,
She thus upbraided his officious zeal:

Dar'ſt thou, vile traitor, take this wicked courſe,
T'attempt thy miſtreſs, and her room to force?
On me thus boldly venture to intrude,
At this unſeemly time, on purpoſe lewd?
Be gone at my command, avoid thy fate!
Obey, or be the object of my hate!
The Smock deliver, or you ſoon ſhall know,
I am no miſtreſs, but a deadly foe.

Then gay Philemon with ſubmiſſive air,
In accents ſoft addreſs'd the charming fair;
His ſly apology he thus begun:
Why does my dear her trueſt lover ſhun?
Have you forgot ſo ſoon? and can you ſee
My adent love, and not be touch'd like me?
By all our kiſſes, by our ſofter nights,
And melting ſweets of innocent delights;
By all that ſacred, by my love, 'tis true,
'Tis love alone has made me rude to you.

Forgive

Forgive my raſhneſs, deareſt, I implore,
And you ſhall find your Phil. tranſgreſs no more.

The lady ſtrait reply'd, Too forward ſwain!
Is this the way thy Celia's heart to gain?
Think'ſt thou that I, who like a caſtle ſtand,
With virtue's guard, and honour's ſacred band,
Can fall a victim to thy treach'rous hand?
Ah! hope not thus my virtue to eſſay,
Nor vainly think that I ſhall fall thy prey:
Reſtore the Smock, then ſhall Philemon find,
His love rewarded, and his miſtreſs kind.

Theſe words pronounc'd with all her female art,
Made ſome impreſſion on Philemon's heart:
A while he paus'd, as ſeeming to comply;
And then ſurvey'd it with a greedy eye;
And whilſt he tender'd back, held faſt the prize,
Like one that half conſents, and half denies:

Surveying fondly with a lover's air,
The nymph, divided betwixt hope and fear:
Then ſtarting ſudden, out he ruſh'd at laſt,
And left her to reflect on what had paſt.

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THE

THE THIEF SLAIN.

CANTO II.

NOW had the morn unbarr'd the gates of light,
And the ſad nymph in ſorrow ſpent the night;
In vain as down ſhe lay, the drowſy god
Touch'd her ſoft temples with his leaden rod:
Reſtleſs ſhe roll'd, and ſometimes dropt a tear;
No muſe is able to expreſs her care.
She rung the bell, and up her Nancy came,
Nancy, the neareſt fav'rite to the dame:
Haſte, haſte, ſhe cry'd, and to Ambroſio run,
Bid him ſpeed hither with the riſing ſun.

Away the damſel poſts, and hardly ſtood
To take her pattens and her riding-hood.
In Linco 's Inn ſhe finds the youth in bed,
Faſt ſnoring, and oppreſs'd with fumes of red.
She wak'd Ambroſio without more delay,
Unus'd to be diſturb'd by break of day;
Told him her errand: Up with ſpeed roſe he,
Dreſt, and went out (O ſtrange!) without his tea.
To Celia now the happy youth approach'd:
Some ſay he walk'd on foot, ſome ſay, was coach'd.
But Oh! what joy was his, by Nancy led,
When he (unhop'd-for bliſs!) drew near the bed.
Thus ſpoke the nymph: Canſt thou, too faithful [ſwain,
Forgive unhappy Celia's paſt diſdain?
And wilt thou, wilt thou, maugre all my pride,
Revenge my cauſe, and lay thy ſcorn aſide!
Wrong'd by Philemon, to thy arms I fly;
O do not, do not then, thy help deny.
Retrieve the Smock, which he has baſely ſtole,
And win, for ever win, my virgin ſoul.

O doubt

O doubt not, beauteous nymph, the ſwain reply'd,
My ſword's ſucceſs, and valour often try'd:
For if there's faith in man, thou may'ſt believe,
I'll loſe my life, or elſe thy Smock retrieve.

Then eager with his lips her hand he preſt,
And of his rival fiercely goes in queſt.
Philemon ſtarts to ſee Ambroſio near,
Wonders; but ſtill a ſtranger is to fear.
Ambroſio's eyes with rage and anger glow,
He meets his rival like a deadly foe.
Or pay me down thy forfeit life, he cries,
Or give me back, raſh youth, the linen prize:
I mean fair Celia's Smock, full well thou know'ſt;
Of ſuch a triumph make not now thy boaſt.
Hence to the plain, and we will ſoon decide,
Which beſt deſerves fair Celia for his bride.
Philemon anſwer'd (not at all diſmay'd)
Art thou turn'd bully for the peerleſs maid?

Then do thy worſt; the Smock I'll not return:
I give it back! no, it ſhall ſooner burn.

Now on the green the combatants engage,
Inſpir'd alike, and fill'd with equal rage:
Their ſwords were of a length, their puſhes juſt,
And as one parry'd, t'other made a thruſt:
With crimſon blood the field was dy'd around,
And each receiv'd and gave full many a wound.
Long was the ſtruggle, and each ſhew'd his ſkill,
No rivals ever fought with better will.
At laſt Philemon made a furious paſs,
And ſtretch'd Ambroſio bleeding on the graſs;
Sore hurt and vanquiſh'd, on the ground he lay.
Philemon ſheath'd his ſword, and ran away,
Lord of the Smock, and of his conqueſt proud,
Stole off, whilſt t'other calls for help aloud.

Now fame which daily travels round the ball,
In Celia's ear proclaim'd Ambroſio's fall.

The nymph, unable to expreſs her grief,
Strait from her faithful Nancy ſought relief:
Ah, I'm undone, my deareſt wench, ſhe ſaid;
Perhaps Ambroſio's kill'd, Philemon fled.
I was to blame to hazard either's life:
Was then a Smock fit argument for ſtrife?
Go, find out Phil. if Phil. can yet be found,
(For much I tremble for my champion's wound)
Coax, flatter, lie; thy utmoſt art employ,
To bring to articles th' ill-natur'd boy:
For ſince it is in vain to think of force
To gain my Shift, I'll take another courſe.
Nor muſt that trophy, which he owes to theft,
Whate'er it coſts, in impious hands be left.
Some wicked lie he may perhaps invent,
And boaſt he had the Smock with my conſent;
Of farther favours none will make a doubt;
And, ah, what fables may not folks give out!
Then ſpare no labour to retrieve the veil;
For Celia's ruin'd, ſhould her Nancy fail.

Swifter than light'ning flew the nimble maid,
And to Philemon ſtrait a viſit paid.
(Philemon of his conqueſt grown ſo proud,
He could not help proclaiming it aloud.)
Fair Nancy, quoth the youth, what brings thee here?
Why on thy face does ſuch concern appear?
Has Celia ſent thee? — For the Smock, I ween;
And is ſhe for a trifle ſo chagrin?
Why does ſhe envy me ſo ſmall a prize,
And perſecute a ſwain, who for her dies?
'Twas but this moment ſhe my rival ſent,
Who may his errand now perhaps repent;
Yonder I left him, bleeding on the plain,
Henceforth he draws no ſword in haſte again.

So ſpake the youth, and Nancy thus reply'd:
My miſtreſs muſt not, muſt not be deny'd;
Without delay do you the Smock reſtore,
Or be condemn'd to ſee her face no more.

A veil ſo ſacred thus to ſnatch away,
Was in a lover ſure the fouleſt play.
Nor would it be by half ſo great a ſin,
Had you in ſtreets a public felon been.
Weigh but the juſtice of my lady's cauſe:
Beſides, to ſteal a Smock, 'tis breach of laws;
And if with vigour ſhe purſues the thing,
At the next ſeſſions you perhaps may ſwing:
Then carry on your jeſt, if wiſe you be,
No farther now, but ſend the Smock by me.

Philemon paus'd at this, and mus'd a while,
Whether he ſhould reſtore or keep the ſpoil:
Plague on theſe women, to himſelf ſaid he,
What if indeed ſhe ſhould in earneſt be!
How far revenge may puſh her on, who knows?
For anger'd Females are the worſt of foes.
Philemon is undone, beyond all doubt,
If injur'd Celia takes a warrant out:

'Tis better far to make up the diſpute,
Than lie in Newgate, or than ſtand a ſuit.

Well, Nancy, then he cry'd, let's all be friends,
This very night the fatal quarrel ends:
In the mean while, bid Celia be at reſt,
I'll bring the Smock, and terminate the jeſt.

Pleas'd with the news, the damſel poſts away
To Celia, who in bed impatient lay:
Riſe, madam, riſe! ſhe cry'd, your point is gain'd;
The raviſh'd Smock will be no more detain'd:
Philemon, at my threats, in mortal fright,
Will, without fail, the trophy bring at night.
Then, madam, haſte to dreſs; diſpel your cares,
And to revenge you, put on all your airs.

Up got the lovely Virgin in a trice,
Reſolving to appear exactly nice;

At her toilet ſhe puts on ev'ry toy,
That ladies uſe, when eager to deſtroy.
Three hours by the clock, (and ſome ſay four)
She ſat in poliſhing her form all o'er,
And culling arrows from her fatal ſtore.

But ah! when throughly dreſt from top to toe,
How charming did ſhe look, how lovely ſhow;
At play, or birth-night ball, was never ſeen
A beauty ſo compleat, ſo gay, ſo clean.
Of crimſon ſattin was her coſtly gown;
Her petticoat was all embroider'd down;
The watch was Tompion's with a golden chain,
And her pearl necklace of the fineſt grain:
Her brilliant ear-rings, which did ſtars out-ſhine,
Came not from Briſtol, but from th' Indian mine:
Her ſhoes were velvet, and her ſtockings ſilk;
Her lace true Flanders, and as white as milk.
So rigg'd at laſt along the room ſhe mov'd,
And in her looking-glaſs each charm improv'd:

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And in her looking-glaſs each charm improv'd:

Scarce

Scarce Hebe look'd ſo blooming, young, or fair,
Or Venus had when dreſs'd, a nobler air:
For now on miſchief ſhe was fully bent,
And had againſt her Phil. a dire intent;
To make him grieve for putting her to pain,
And puniſh the raſh youth with juſt diſdain.

The ſun below th' horizon was declin'd,
And beauteous Celia now had lately din'd;
When in comes Phil. to his appointment true,
At whoſe approach the ſervants ſtrait withdrew.
Celia a while ſtood mute, then ſilence broke;
Looking demure, and bluſhing as ſhe ſpoke.

Thou baſe uſurper of a maiden's Shift,
O tell me what could be thy impious drift?
So lewd an action can admit no plea;
I little could expect all this from thee!
Had you my ſnuff-box, or my fan purloin'd,
Or on my gloves, or maſk, your theft deſign'd;

Or ſtole away, what's worſe, my darling Shock;
Or any moveable, beſides my Smock;
I could forgive and with the crime diſpenſe;
But who can pardon ſuch a rude offence?

Fair maid, he anſwer'd, finiſh the diſpute;
As for what's paſt, I'll be for ever mute;
And in no Coffee-houſe will make my boaſt,
That of her Smock I once depriv'd a toaſt.
But ſince your lover with your ſuit complies,
You muſt be kind, if he reſtores the prize:
Be mine anon, the whole, the live-long night,
And bleſs thy lover's arms with vaſt delight.
But leſs than that, no motive can prevail,
To make me tender back the myſtick veil.

Celia confus'd, ſcarce knew what to reply,
Look'd much ſurpriz'd, and downward caſt her eye;
And will no terms but theſe ſuffice, ſaid ſhe?
And muſt I for a Shift, your victim be?

Conditions much too hard, and too unjuſt:
Is then Philemon's love all turn'd to luſt?
Yet, tho' 'till now, my heart was like a rock,
I'll ſooner yield, than you ſhall keep the Smock.

In raptures now, the happy youth ſurvey'd,
And in his arms embrac'd the beauteous maid;
With decent action, he the Smock reſigns,
And ardently round Celia's waſte he twines.
Soft pleaſure now ſucceeds an age of pain,
And the glad youth enjoys, what long he ſought in vain.

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F I N I S.

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